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Icon-Verbal Interaction and Picture Book Reception: Challenges of Reading in Elementary School*

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Abstract

This article brings together the results of the research: "Formal characterization of picture book reception in school context (second grade of the Escuela Normal Superior in Armenia). A path towards the strengthening of meaningful competence", advanced with the purpose of knowing how children in second grade of schooling read picture books, and the influence of their reading modes on the development of meaning competence (Ministry of National Education, 1998, MEN, for its initials in Spanish) *. The methodology adopted implied: 1) the recognition of the group's own reading practices; 2) the establishment of a corpus of picture books, from the *Colección Semilla* (Seed Collection); 3) the design and application of instruments for data collection, and their subsequent analysis. For interpretation, two mechanisms were used: 1) comparison between reading behavior during two reading circumstances (collective and individual); and 2) establishment of emerging categories. From the analysis, it is concluded: 1) greater frequency of appealing to the iconic code than to the verbal one in collective reading; 2) a tendency to fill lexical and narrative gaps with linguistic and cultural tools of the own repertoire; 3) skill in the recognition of the narrative point of view and the chronological unit of the story; and 4) recognition of the act of reading as a socially hierarchical practice.

Keywords: meaning competence, icon-verbal interaction, picture book, reading reception.

Introduction

In contrast to the traditional conception of language as a vehicle of communication governed by formal and functional rules (linguistic competence), there is an urgent need to consider the significant (meaning) dimension of language as the fundamental axis of basic training in the mother tongue. It is a matter of making possible the transformation of human experience into meaning, so that the subject (the real user of the language) can regulate the elaboration of meanings that arise from the various processes of social communication to which he or she is constantly confronted, among which, in the case of schools, the processes of reading stand out. Thus, we must recognize the relevance of classroom proposals that can contribute to reflection on the processes that students use when constructing meanings (whether or not they come from literary texts).

With this, some problems become evident such as the equivalence between reading and decoding (Potocki, Ecalle and Magnan, 2013), the difficulty to establish intertextual relationships (Mendoza, 2008), to elaborate the global sense of the texts, or to read and interpret images (Pantaleo, 2014; Arizpe and Styles, 2004) among other limitations associated with the reception of literary works. Consequently, the present project seeks to provide potentially useful tools in the understanding of the mechanisms used by students to construct meaning from the reading of picture books. This would shed light on the impact of these processes on the *meaning competence* of the participants and, therefore, on the intervention strategies aimed at first recognizing strengths and weaknesses in reading and, subsequently, at strengthening the former and reducing the latter.

This project is in line with Colombian education policies in that it generates research proposals useful for improving the skills involved in developing the meaning competence of students in basic and secondary education. Thus, the present study responds to the call of the *Spanish Language Curriculum Guidelines* (MEN, 1998) for the school to promote dialogues between literature and other arts or disciplines; and integrates the expressed will of the *Basic Standards of Language Competence* (MEN, 2006) to include the visual component as part of basic literacy. Dimensions considerably favored in the processes of reception of scrapbooks, and involved in the curricular documents mentioned. Documents that highlight the value of intertextuality in networking to make sense of the world and the readings that individuals make of it. In other words, networks that emerge in a recurring way when reading the book album and that could promote both the development of the reader and the aesthetic pleasure.

For its part, the National Reading and Writing Plan (MEN, 2011) offers the *Colección Semilla* (Seed Collection) to all public educational institutions in Colombia. Therefore, working with a corpus of books contained in this collection is not only viable in terms of disseminating research and its results, but also relevant to the plans and projections of the Colombian Ministries of Education and Culture.

At this point, we consider it feasible, once this project has been completed, to strengthen it through possible replicas of research that will allow a broader view of the way in which second grade students interpret some books that are fully available in their institutions. Previous research has shown the advantages of picture books in educational work. In addition to those already mentioned, we would like to highlight the activation of cognitive and affective processes, the strengthening of social skills, the stimulation of imagination promoted by the polysemic nature of illustration (Salisbury and Styles, 2014), and the strengthening of the reading intertext (Mendoza, 2008). On the other hand, the collaboration of the image with the text stimulates the consolidation of new semantic networks and promotes the surprise factor (Potocki, Ecalle and Magnan, 2013; Silva, 2005), develops artistic and aesthetic sensibility, and is a support for reflection (Lee, 2014), helps to understand the other (Durán, 2008), and re-elaborates reality to express it in an artistic way (Colomer and Fittipaldi, 2012). It is also worth noting the value of producing this type of work within the framework of a young, yet powerful, tradition in both Spain (Durán, 2015) and Latin America, and especially in Colombia (Garralón, 2015). These aspects lead us to consider the academic, school and thus social relevance of this research proposal.

Methodology

The process to develop the research and achieve the objectives of the study implies the overcoming of five phases: 1) recognition of the group, the teacher and the reading practices of the participants; 2) establishment of a corpus of Seed Collection scrapbooks appropriate to the purpose of the research and the reading nature of the group; 3) design of instruments for data collection; 4) application of the instruments in the intervention process; 5) analysis and interpretation of the data. For the presentation of results and discussion, we follow these five phases so that the reader can recognize the chronological nature of the research.

The interview

The contact with the teacher of the group, through a semi-structured interview, allows an approach to her conception of the area, of reading and of other aspects related to the processes of literary education linked to her teaching practice. The key elements of this stage are outlined below. The teacher assumes the act of reading as a process that transcends decoding and verbal reading. The criteria for the selection of works, on the other hand, vary according to the purpose of reading. In some cases, the intention responds to the very taste of reading; in others, it is related to various tasks, among which she highlights the place of moral values. The figure of the reader also varies aloud; in most cases, the teacher reads to the group, but when it comes to "short" readings, children can do so.

The teacher praises the support of other institutions, thanks to which students participate in additional, animated reading exercises and highlights the role of the "playroom" and

the "reading terrace" as spaces specially arranged by the school to facilitate children's access to books. The practice of reading picture books developed in class is usually done with only one copy, of which the teacher shows the images. The time allocated for this type of exercise varies between 15 and 20 minutes per picture book. The selection depends mainly on the teacher's interest, linked to the title of the work and, in other cases, to the desire to articulate the areas of language and ethics.

The corpus

For the second phase of the research, aimed at selecting a corpus of picture books, three works (Spanish translated versions) were chosen: *¡Buenas noches Gorila!* (Good Night, Gorilla) (Rathmann, 2001); *Fernando Furioso* (Angry Arthur) (Oram and Kitamura, 1989); and *¡Así fue! ¡No, fue así! ¡No, así!* (It was like this! No, like this!) (Schärer, 2010). The guided reading of *¡Buenas noches Gorila!* determined the first meeting with the participants, in an atmosphere of cooperation in which the importance of verbal and visual codes in the reading of book albums was highlighted. With *Fernando Furioso*, the second part of the intervention was developed, which included exercises that allowed us to recognize some characteristics of the reading process, individual and group, related to the icon-verbal interaction and its impact on the construction of meaning; and finally, the reading of *¡Así fue! ¡No, fue así! ¡No, así!* was guided by the high dialogical character of the work, by the quality of its narrative resources and by the unique way in which the ethical and aesthetic dimension is expressed in it.

Population and sample

This research is carried out with a mixed group (boys and girls) of twenty-six students belonging to the second grade of schooling at the Escuela Normal Superior del Quindío (an official educational institution). The field work was carried out in the second academic semester of 2016. The sample is the videotaped record of the literary conversations of each session; and the four data collection sheets we use to register the students' individual and group interventions.

The instruments

Four instruments were developed to record each of the class meetings, so that a daily record could be established, and several sources of information about the reading modes put into play during the whole intervention. The purpose of this data collection is to extract useful information in order to: 1) know the type of representations that the children derive from the initial reading, and to know if the source from which they start to understand is the image, the written text, if it is a combination of both, or if they do not use any of them; 2) return to the first reading, to complement and refute the ideas discussed in the literary conversation of the previous session; 3) face the task of graphically representing some elements of the picture book *Fernando Furioso*. Later on, a new literary conversation was proposed based on the reading of *¡Así fue! ¡No, fue así! ¡No, así!* in which special attention was paid to the factors that frame the story from the covers to the graphic distribution of the images.

The aspects of editing which, in some cases, influence the construction of meaning, and which seem to intervene in the reading process in a less evident way, were also the object of this discussion. The fourth and final instrument is a guide to interview participants individually in order to learn about the narrative resources they use to read picture books. This information is presented to the reader of this article according to the chronological order in which the class sessions appear and their respective critical analysis. Issues overlapped in both the results and discussion sections.

The field work

We used three mechanisms for data analysis. On the one hand, we established a series of comparisons that help to observe recurrences and differences in participants' responses in two reading circumstances: individual and collective. Thus, we observed different levels of the reading process, according to the following criteria: frequency of appeal to the verbal, iconic, or iconic-verbal code; type of relationships established during the reading process; and recognition of components of the narrative structure that facilitate or hinder comprehension. The second mechanism of analysis consists of categorizing the resources used by the children to make a drawing from the reading of one of the picture books. The third mechanism consists of the categorization of reader responses, coming from literary conversations, through Colomer and Fittipaldi's Visual Journeys model (2012: 79-81) which proposes four types of response: Referential, Compositional, Intertextual-Interpersonal, or Personal. Let's move on then to the development of the sessions.

Results

Session 1

The first meeting begins with a collective reading of *Fernando Furioso*, and an exercise aimed at identifying the ways in which the participants construct meaning during the reading of the picture book. The question of what story this play tells is mainly answered by appeals to the literal information in the picture: there is a character (Fernando) in an altered emotional state (angry). However, when asked how they know this, most participants state that "the book says so" [our translation] and allude to the image of Fernando frowning, or refer to the images in the picture book, in which this information is "shown" even though it is not "said" verbally: "the book said that Fernando was very angry and broke the whole earth" [our translation]. Although the word "break" is not used in the picture book, the images allow to build the ideas that the children project in different answers: "He was hanging in a tree when the avalanche happened", "there was a piece of planet", "the earth opened up like a shell", "he sat on the bed and thought and thought. Then he calmed down a little bit... and went to sleep a little bit", "there was a picture with a man like that" (our translation of what the student says as he puts his hands on his face with a surprised expression).

On the other hand, we see how the participants, in order to answer the question "what is the story about", establish relationships between at least two elements of the story, which implies a recognition of the narrative timeline expressed through causal relationships, in some cases, or from other types of sequential relationships between two situations. This feature interests us because it constitutes a mechanism for interpretation and projection of the story in the conversation about the picture book. In other words, the children's response marks and recognizes the chronological principle of the narrative. Some examples of responses that appeal to causal relationships are: "Because of Fernando's anger, the thunder fell", "Fernando was angry because his mother didn't let him see the film and there was a lot of lightning and everything was damaged", "He caused many earthquakes, many tremors", "Fernando finally went to bed and he said 'why did all this happen'", "Fernando was angry and everyone told him 'enough' and it wasn't enough" [our translation].

In the first session we asked some questions that invited the children to think about the source from which they take the ideas to answer. Thus, for most of them, the re-construction of the story depends mainly on the interaction between the iconic and the verbal; to a lesser extent, other students point out that this task depends more on images than on words; and finally, a few participants underline in this sense the capital importance of the verbal dimension. On the other hand, we observed how the question about the image of the cracked earth is the one that is least answered by allusions to the iconic code. When asked about items not mentioned during the album conversation, children remember, more than in any other case, the verbal information in the picture book articulated with the images.

In this first session we also found that the children used their own words to fill gaps of various kinds: lexical, semantic, and / or moral, and were able to relate the logic of fiction as an elementary principle of the story being told. These factors, highlighted in the participants' responses during sessions one and two, are developed in the section "discussion" to develop the respective interpretation.

Session 2

It begins with a re-reading of the picture book, this time through questions aimed at establishing inferences that reinforce the recognition of the fictional component. In a picture of the play, Fernando sees a cowboy movie. There the character is shown in his room, in front of a television set from which come out western chariots, arrows and cactus. Students understand the use of fiction in this way: "Because you're watching a cowboy movie, then there you see... as that is a cactus and where the cowboys go there are cactuses" [our translation].

In this quotation, the participant recognizes the cactus as a sign-index in the context of the cowboy, and thus explains the presence of this graphic resource on the page. This same fictional dimension involves, to a lesser extent, the difficulties inherent in explaining what happens in a story when it breaks the laws of logic. For that matter, let's think of another image from the album, where Fernando's anger triggers a hurricane whose force raises a cigarette billboard. The hurricane, thanks to the fiction introduced by the visual code, also tears out the cigarettes, and makes them fly as separable units of the fence. In the classroom, this image gave rise to interventions such as "Those aren't real cigarettes, they're cigarettes, they're gigantic on that poster", or like the following (our translations):

- *Teacher:* « Fernando's anger turned into a hurricane that ripped the roofs off the houses, the chimneys and the church tower." Why are those cigarettes so big? (teacher calls out the name of ST.1).
- *ST. 1:* Because they're fake.
- *Teacher:* How fake?... (teacher says the name of ST.2)
- *ST.2:* Because they are an illustration.
- *Teacher:* Of what?
- *ST.2:* Well, about those cigarettes... A presentation of those cigarettes.
- *ST.3:* There are cigarettes this big.
- *Teacher:* Really?
- *ST.4:* Because they made a article thing, painted a little piece of orange article and stuck it on and got out.
- *Teacher:* OK! Where did those cigarettes come from?
- *ST.1:* From the box.

The establishment of inferences is evident in these appeals to the fictional component, as expressed in the answers as to why the fiction.

Session 3

For the first time, the picture book *¡Así fue! ¡No, fue así! ¡No, así!* is addressed. The session starts with a preliminary collective reading, with questions aimed at identifying

the ways in which the children approach the fundamental narrative components of the work and the relationship between them. The main intention is to know which narrative components facilitate the processes of understanding and which ones represent difficulties. The fact that this picture book problematizes a linear event, insofar as the same sequence of actions is told from four different perspectives that open up the possibility of interpreting the story with a greater degree of dialogue, affects the fact that the conversation is directed towards the development of the story, the recognition of the narrative point of view and its dialogical implications.

Later on, in an individual reading of the same album, the tendency of children to stop during the decoding of verbal language, activity marked by whispering in a low voice, and by neglecting the details of the image in a generalized review of the page, without apparent interest in the details, stands out. In the guided collective reading, on the other hand, the attention to the images seemed much greater, and the reading time was always longer than that of the individual reading. In both cases, however, most of the children used arguments taken from both codes (verbal and visual) to answer questions about how they arrived at their reading responses, an aspect that was extended in the development of Session 4.

At the end of the session, participants are asked to make a drawing related to the album *Fernando Furioso*. Deliberately, the request is avoided with phrases such as: "draw a picture *about* the album", or "*of* the album", or "*of* Fernando", so that the drawings allow to recognize the resources that the participants use to make the representations; that is, if they take internal or external elements to the story, if they make transformations of the facts narrated, if they establish relationships with elements outside the story, or if they represent some of the secondary characters, among other potentially creative options. In short, the exercise aims to know the main focuses of interest in the creation of children. With this, three categories of drawings emerge: 1) Literal, determined by the extreme closeness between the drawing and an image of the book; 2) Of the protagonist out of context or in an unclear context, determined by the literal representation of the protagonist in a context not present in the work; and, 3) Of personal creation, determined by a greater degree of involvement of the child with the work, appreciable in the introduction of characters or elements of his or her environment. In this regard, we present the following interpretation, illuminated by the type of drawings that are achieved at the end of the activity.

Three literal representations with elements alluding to context



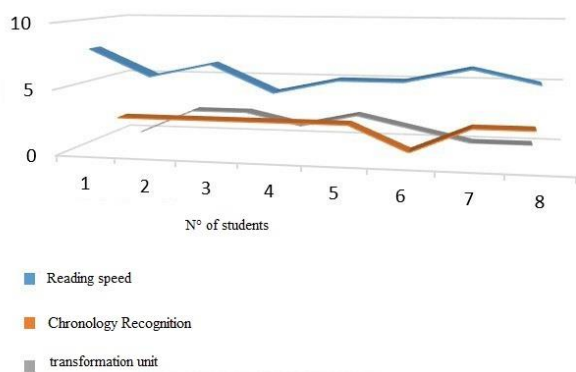
The result shows us that these readers tend to generate literal reproductions, either by imitating the textual scenes of the album, or by adaptations that, in most cases, are limited to changing or omitting resources from the original image. About half of the group (46%) construct images in which the character appears outside the spatial context; 29% elaborate representations in which the context is a deliberate creation, but the character is an obvious imitation of the illustrations in the album, while 21% of the participants reproduce the precise spatial context that the work provides. Only 4% of the students construct images that do not obey the iconography of the book but constitute elaborations or alterations of the color, the gesture, the staging, or the names of the characters.

This last point corresponds to the category that, we believe, illustrates a greater involvement of the child with the work.

Session 4

In the fourth and last meeting, individual interviews are conducted with all 26 participants. The questions of this instrument have the purpose of specifying the resources that the children use to read books album, and to approach their narrative components and their aesthetic proposal. These aspects were: the narrative point of view, the quotes as a sign of the change of voice, the perspective of the scene - focus, the chronology, the spatial context of the story, and the unit of transformation. By means of a comparative table (Figure 1) the relationship between the six narrative components and their degree of recognition during the reading process was established.

Figure 1 (Individual guided reading)



Own elaboration

Figure 1 shows a high recognition of the spatial context in which the story takes place, of its chronological development, and of the various narrative points of view used in the work. When participants are asked if they recognize the place, at the end of the story, almost all of them refer to the element that determines the spatial context of the events: the forest. In fact, the circular structure of this story makes the story end in the same place where it begins. Regarding the chronology, we ask about the representation that the squirrel, a witness character, makes on the ground, indicating with numbers the logical sequence of the scenes. A significant number of children find the meaning of this image and many of them even use the word "scenes" to justify the use of numbers in the linear representation of time. Thus, the vast majority of the participants identified the difference between the character that tells the story and the one who is the protagonist. In the album this subject draws attention because there are three scenes in which the same character is presented in both ways: as a narrator and as a character.

Teacher: Are there two badgers?

ST. I: No.

Teacher: And why is he out of frame?

ST. I: Because he's telling the story.

In relation to the other three narrative components that we explored in this closing activity, the results were less homogeneous. The direct style, focus, and unit of transformation were identified by the readers according to the degrees that we explain below. The direct style, marked in "quotes" to indicate the change in voice, is the component of the narrative structure least recognized by the children. Many thought that this sign indicated continuity: "means that... that another leaf follows", "that more follows", "that continues", others confused the function of the mark: "means period", "it is used to separate things" (our translations).

To observe the focus, participants were asked why, on a double page, the squirrel, thanks to the swooping perspective, looks bigger than the other animals in the scene: the bear, the badger, and the fox. In an almost equal proportion, eleven children recognized the focusing phenomenon, while nine did not. Among the participants who offered explanations for this, allusions to relationships of closeness and distance stand out. That is, many of them relate the focus to the distance of the character from the reader. Let's see an example:

Teacher: And why is the squirrel bigger than them?

ST. I: No.

Teacher: Isn't it bigger?

ST. I: It is small.

Teacher: Is it small? But here it looks big.

ST. I: Uhum... Because it is close.

Thanks to the unit of transformation, the characters in the story move from enmity to friendship. This transformation, however, is not very evident to most children. Only 33% of them identify the change in the relationship between the characters as the distinctive feature of the final scene. Many others point out that what changes at the end of the story, with respect to the beginning, is which of the characters is "behind

this one or that one", or say that the difference is that now there are more pieces of wood, or other comments tending to emphasize the detail of the image, to the detriment of the overall sense of the story.

Discussion

Session 1

In *Fernando Furioso's* collective reading, the place of the image in the students' answers to questions about "what happens", "how it happens" or "why" has been pointed out as a high value factor in the development of iconographic reading and production capacity in this same code. A school research exercise developed in Canada, in which seventh grade students read graphic novels and comics, coincides with our observation: "The analysis of the data also revealed how learning about the what, why and how of the mode of image and the medium of comics affected the students' responses to Sidekicks" (Pantaleo, 2014: 28). As opposed to the emphasis on the appeal to the iconographic code for the representation of the semantic plane, we find correspondence with another study carried out in Italy by Marnie Campagnaro (2013), from which we conclude the enormous strength of the iconographic code as a source of meaning in comprehension processes carried out by readers who are located far beyond preschool education:

Picture books are a valuable educational resource in the children's growth. Thanks to the peculiar language of the iconic narration, children can demonstrate, if properly stimulated, unexpected critical reading skills. In recent years, the Italian production of picture books has not only been aimed at preschool children, but has also been enriched by original and daring proposals, that seem to favourably meet the interest of more mature readers (Campagnaro, 2013: 89).

The activities around the reading of *Fernando furioso* allow us to observe the conscience of the participants about the social implications of the reading, matter that is developed in the conclusions of the present article; and about the recognition of fiction in the work: "Why Fernando did not die in space?" This question alludes to the scene in which the protagonist, irate, arrives to the outer space without suits, nor masks for the oxygen supply, while his grandmother, with an astronaut suit, knits in a rocking chair that floats weightless by the space. The children know that Fernando does not use these accessories, but they also know that he does not need them to survive: "Because they are drawings", "Because that is not real". In this last answer, the participant makes a gesture with her hands indicating the obviousness of the matter, and adds: "Of course, it's as if I were going there and already dying" "it's a drawing, it's not real". Answers associated with the relationship between reality and fiction. The apparent naturalness and simplicity of this recognition have been pointed out in literature.

In this regard, we find statements that separate the way adults assume the relationship reality-fiction, with respect to the way children do it. Suzy Lee (2014), for example, compares three of her albums and concludes:

The limit shared by *Mirror*, *Wave* and *Shadow* is the central fold of the book and, at the same time, the limit between fantasy and reality. For children, moving from one space to another is nothing more than a fun game. However, adults who prefer complicated things will find much more. Is the world we live in this clear and lucid? How can we know what is reality and what is illusion? [our translation] (Lee, 2014: 85).

About this same scene of Fernando, another student notes "He was so angry that he didn't smell in space". Here, in spite of the evident confusion between the words "to breathe" and "to smell", the girl accepts the fictional dimension implied in the scene because she recognizes the presence of the oxygen as necessary condition to survive, but she assumes, in the logic of the story, that it is the anger of Fernando the one that allows him to survive there. In different cases the children use "equivalent" words in their representations of the history. One of them, for example, talks about "the lake" and another one corrects "the tsunami". The album actually talks about a "wailing typhoon", not about lakes, nor about tsunamis, but they fill this lexical gap with words that are from their own repertoire, and that do correspond to the visual image of the respective scenes in the album. In another case a participant says: "And he lays down on a piece of Saturn". The album never talks about Saturn but, at the end of the story, Fernando lies down on his bed, which floats on a piece of Mars.

Session 2

As mentioned above, the inferences about the fictional component, visible in the cigars that are detached from the fence, in the cactus that indicate the presence of the cowboy, or in the reader's morality projected outside the limits of the story, constitute elements that are especially present in collective readings. These ideas may be in tune with statements derived from a study developed in France, with the purpose of finding the correlation between the inferential reading ability of the one who hears the story and the one who reads it. As these are guided readings in a collective, the notion of "listening to the story" seems to coincide with our observation that it constitutes a personal capacity that can be translated into the "reading" of the verbal and iconic code, respectively: "the predictors of young children's listening comprehension performance are indeed similar to those identified in the literature as predictive of reading comprehension performance" (Potocki, Ecalle & Magnan, 2013: 14).

This phenomenon is repeated in several episodes of the intervention. Thus, establishing predictions about what will happen in history is an operation in which many readers deploy resources from their own repertoire.

Let's see another case. During the reading of *Fernando Furioso*, we find a scene that discreetly announces the arrival of the typhoon. In this image, the attentive reader will notice how the water that will flood the city comes running down one of the destroyed streets. When the teacher asks, "What is that blue stain? one of the children answers: "The tsunami has been coming for a long time". On the next page, the "wailing typhoon" causes the flooding. When the teacher asks, "What is a typhoon? the teacher finds the following answer: "A typhoon is where the water goes", an answer that leads to lexical confusion (between the words "typhoon" and "siphon") and implies the alteration of the meaning. In other examples, on the contrary, the precision of the answer is remarkable: "There is less gravity than on earth", an intervention with which one of the students explains why Fernando floats in space, or "Because the television is flooding the room", another participant's answer to the question "Why does Fernando's room have a white background?" (our translations).

There were, on the other hand, gaps that the children filled with moral judgments. At the end of the story, when Fernando cannot remember why he was angry, he is shown in his bed with a sad expression. In the written text, the author simply says that Fernando "could not remember", but the children conclude that he is sorry:

- *ST. 1:* Fernando felt bad at the end.
- *Teacher:* Do you think there is a reason why Fernando felt bad?
- *ST. 1:* Because he destroyed a lot
- *Teacher:* Because he destroyed a lot, well (the teacher says the name of ST.2)
- *ST.2:* He regretted it.
- *Teacher:* Did he regret it?
- *ST. 2:* For all the damage he had done.

While one might think of Fernando's frustration at not remembering the reason for his anger, the album barely outlines some hints of regret. The work does not openly present a moral but, even so, the children who participate in the above-mentioned dialogue naturally and explicitly assume the moral character of the end of the album. At the beginning of the activity when the question "Who is Fernando?" was asked, the participants qualified him with adjectives of the type "disobedient" or "rebellious", that is to say by means of inferences about the character's character.

In the same vein, another student derives ethical conclusions, based on the assumption that the words in the album "say it", even though he refers to the images to establish his conclusion:

- *Teacher:* And he went to bed. And where did you see that, why do you say that?
-
- *ST. 1:* Because the words said it, by the words and the images.
- *Teacher:* What words did Fernando use to apologize?
- *ST. 1:* He cared.
- *Teacher:* He cared?
- *ST. 1:* And he apologized alone and went to bed.

In the album, Fernando never apologizes, although the student takes it for granted. The answer may seem just an intuition, but it is more convenient to recognize the value of image in the adoption-consolidation of personal points of view that the reader can project from the book to himself and vice versa. A transversal procedure to the generation of empathy or rejection; to the development of abstract thought; and even to learning itself in general terms:

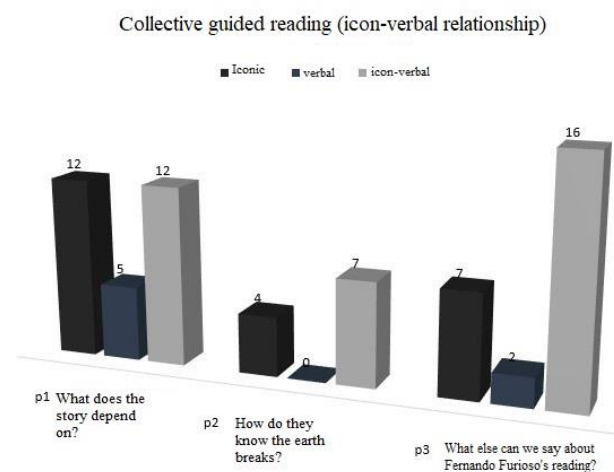
[...] Piaget's theory is too simplistic and [...] some children develop abstract thinking before the age of eleven, or they empathize with other people's points of view before the age of seven. Specifically, with regard to visual literacy, these ideas are important because it is almost always the images in books that allow children to interpret ideas in a more sophisticated way than would be expected for their age. What most educators and psychologists agree on is the enormous potential for learning through observation [our translation] (Salisbury & Styles, 2014: 78-79).

Sessions 3 and 4

The activity of iconographic creation, as expressed in figure 2, mainly motivates the mimetic reproduction of scenes-characters, and this emphasis on the literal response seems reinforced by the lack of attention to detail during the individual reading. A certain superficiality in the recognition of the narrated plot may be the reflection of a reading limited to the general decoding of the work. However, during the interviews (session 4), the responses associated with the narrative point of view and the spatial-temporal circumstances of the story put us in front of the value of the compositional and personal levels of Colomer and Fittipaldi's (2012) classification model, in the sense of contributing to the construction of the meaning of the stories with elements of the own repertoire. The complete balance of this model is presented in the chapter of conclusions.

As we have pointed out in the results section, the interviews reflect a certain homogeneity of the result on the three initial components: point of view, chronology, and spatial context; and, a disparity of the three remaining factors: direct style, focus, and the unit of transformation. This leads us to explore the correlation of two variables considered in the same exercise: reading speed vs. recognition of the chronotope. By recognition of the chronotope, we understand here the children's attention to both the logical sequence of the scenes, and the unit of transformation of the story which, as has been said, attends to how the end of the story marks the passage from enmity to friendship, in the same spatial context, a forest, in which the story begins and ends. The result of the correlation (Figure 2) shows a certain independence of the variables, which suggests that comprehension is not necessarily associated with reading speed¹.

Figure 2 (Correlation)



Own elaboration

Conclusions

By interpreting the ways these second graders interact with picture books, they found different ways to read pictures and words. From this research some means were derived to know how the reading processes of the participants affect the consolidation of their *meaning competence*, a competence less competitive and closer to the particular way as each one "fills with meaning and sense to the signs" (MEN, 1998). Thus, the following conclusions are established, directly articulated with the mechanisms of analysis used for the discussion: compare and establish emerging categories. Let us start with the comparisons.

1. Although we have pointed out some works in the framework of this discussion, there are still others that are very important to continue the discussion. Some of them are: Real and Valencia (2014); Margallo and Fittipaldi (2009); Durán (2008, 2001); Arizpe and Styles (2004); Prado (2004); Lewis (2001); Niko-lajeva, and Scott (2001).

The code used

From analysis to individual and collective reading processes, it can be concluded that in group reading, to intervene in the literary conversation, children appeal mainly to the information provided by the iconic and icon-verbal codes, different from what happens in individual reading, characterized by an excess of attention to verbal and syllabic decoding, and by little interest in visual language. This issue would be relevant for another study that examines, for example, the correlation between verbal fluency during reading aloud and comprehension level, which is the object of interesting reflections in the second grade school context in the United States (Evanchan, 2015). Likewise, it is more evident the establishment of causal relations in collective reading, thanks to which it is possible to delve into details that mark the unit of general transformation of the story, in contrast to individual reading, a process in which there is a general neglect of iconographic details.

Mechanisms for filling gaps

(Literary pact, paraphrasing, establishing moral judgments).

In both forms of reading there is a tendency to fill lexical or semantic gaps that may interrupt the comprehension process, either through paraphrasing, validation of the fictional component, or the establishment of moral judgments. Este rasgo comporta una valoración personal asociada con la fase de interpretación: una de las más complejas del proceso lector (Mendoza Fillola, 2008). This feature entails a personal assessment associated with the interpretation phase: one of the most complex in the reading process (Mendoza Fillola, 2008). It is about the relationships that the readers establish in the exercise of their *meaning competence*. On paraphrasing, children express what they have understood as a global unit of meaning, even when this does not coincide verbally or iconographically with the totality of the work. As opposed to the fictional component, the presence of "impossibles" in reality, such as going to outer space without oxygen masks, or pulling out, one by one, the cigarettes from a billboard, is assumed to be possible, in and thanks to the logic of fiction.

The establishment of moral judgments, on the other hand, is a remarkable procedure by which children project their own notions of right and wrong, and involve ideas, principles, or judgments from their own ethical repertoire, by intervening in literary conversations.

The narrative components

(Difficulties and successes in the process of understanding).

We note that in both individual and collective reading practices, the participants are able to recognize the narrative point of view, the chronological sequence of events narrated, and the spatial context of the story, aspects that are broadly represented visually. On the other hand, the use of quotes to indicate the change of voice in the narration, and the variants of icon-verbal interaction to establish the unit of transformation at the end of the story, offer greater difficulties of understanding.

The above, either by the addition of information, for example when a large number of participants assume that Fernando declares his repentance, in *Fernando furioso*; or by omission, when for many it goes unnoticed the change in the relationship of the animals at the beginning, and at the end of the story, in *¡Así fue! ¡No, fue así! ¡No, así!*. From the correlation between the speed of reading and the recognition or not of the double chronology - unit of transformation, we conclude that the speed of reading does not guarantee the full comprehension of structural components of the story; neither does it necessarily prevent it, the slowness of reading.

Reading as a cultural asset

In this group of students reading is recognized as a socially hierarchical practice. When reading the albums, the participants tend to prejudice as "correct" or "incorrect" their own interpretations or those of their peers. Some may report to each other or to the teacher, with observations such as "read well" or "you don't know how to read". In other words, they assume the reading process as a cultural asset (Bourdieu, 2012), whose mastery "should" be a basic condition of the school environment to which they belong. For this reason, some assume the right-duty to scold each other. Let us note that, for that matter, this notion of "correct" reading affects socially the possibilities of reception and participation, as well as reducing, to good or bad, the practices of verbal and iconographic reading, indistinctly. However, we could infer that this issue, more than by spontaneous generation, is constituted as a reflection of some sectors of the school system, highly concerned with measuring reading performance levels comparatively. A valuable example to demonstrate the problem in the second grade of schooling, and which also compares the reading achievements in native and second language, is the work of Gutiérrez and Vanderwood (2013).

Emerging categories

Finally, we note that the graphic representations that children make of the album can be classified through three emerging categories: 1) the level of closeness between the representation and the original image (literal drawings); 2) the type of relationship established between the character represented and the context of the representation (character out of context, or in an unclear context); and 3) the greater degree of involvement of the reader with the work. The basic conclusion is to point out that the intention to achieve creative or transformative representations of the images in the album is barely noticeable. In general, the result is located between the literal representation of scenes in the album, and the reproduction of the main character placed in an undefined environment.

Contrast with Visual Journeys

A general balance of the children's responses, in light of Colomer and Fittipaldi's (2012) classification model, has led to the following conclusions: A large part of the responses corresponding to individual reading, and the recognition of narrative components, are associated with the Reference level. The *Compositional* level stands out in the answers used during the collective readings by constant appeal to the images. The *Intertextual/Intercultural* level stands out when children recognize in *Fernando Furioso* the style of Satoshi Kitamura, thanks to the previous reading of *In the Attic* (also illustrated by Kitamura); and, when they fill in gaps of information with tools taken from their own cultural and linguistic environment. Finally, the *Personal* level stands out through the moral assessments made during the reading of both albums. In them, the participants express ideas about the "correct" child behavior, in comments about "friendship", "obedience" or "self-control", as values; and, about "reading" as a social practice.

In this way, it is concluded that the investigation allowed to characterize some processes of reception of picture books in second grade of basic primary, an exercise from which the ideas previously commented are derived, and the certainty that it is convenient to continue the reflection. To ask oneself how do second graders read album books implies the recognition of many and very varied factors, whose total apprehension overflows the possibilities of a single approach. However, we consider that this approach puts us in front of the need to rethink the value and the necessity of deepening in the icono-verbal interaction as a valid, particular and powerful source of communication, whose reading should and can be taught, learned and enjoyed.

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